

purpose  
of #

title of book

TOPIC  
SENT

In To Kill a Mockingbird, the quote that defines Tom Robinson occurs

during court and causes serious problems for him. Tom is kind-hearted

Big  
picture  
sentence

and gentle, but because he is black and living in Maycomb at the time, he

constantly faces prejudice and racism. When he is on trial for murder and

CONTEXT

- who
- what
- when
- where
- why

Mr. Gilmer questions him, Tom says this about about helping Mayella

Ewell, "I felt right sorry for her, she seemed to try more'n the rest of 'em"

(Lee 197). While this may seem like a kind gesture and warm sentiment,

Tom's words astonish and mortify the Maycomb courtroom. Tom's

show how  
and why  
this is  
important

compassion for Mayella is such a problem because feeling sorry for

someone implies, on some level, that you think they are worse off than you

are. For a black man like Tom to even suggest that he is better than

Mayella Ewell, a white person, rattles the social order of Maycomb. Sadly,

right after saying this, Tom "realized his mistake and shifted

uncomfortably in the chair" (Lee 197). However, his words had already

been spoken and it was too late; the damage had been done. The entire

courtroom thinks the worst of him. Tom's truthful response defines him in

2nd Quote  
and  
context +  
explain  
and unpack

the novel because he is sincere, but his honesty elicits a harsh judgment

from the people of Maycomb who mistake his compassion for self-

righteousness.

Explain &  
unpack  
QUOTE

Final  
sentence  
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Topic Sent